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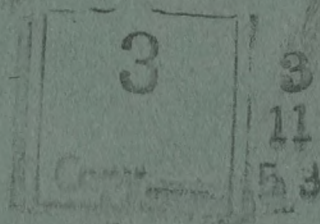
MR CUSHING'S  
INTRODUCTORY DISCOURSE,

DELIVERED BEFORE THE  
AMERICAN INSTITUTE OF INSTRUCTION,

IN

BOSTON, AUGUST, 1834.

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**INTRODUCTORY DISCOURSE,**  
**DELIVERED BEFORE THE**  
**AMERICAN INSTITUTE OF INSTRUCTION,**

**AT THEIR**

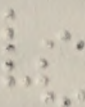
**FIFTH ANNIVERSARY MEETING, IN BOSTON,**

**AUGUST, 1834.**

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**BY CALEB CUSHING.**

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**B O S T O N :**  
**TUTTLE AND WEEKS.....8 SCHOOL STREET.**  
**1834.**



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INTRODUCTION

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THE AMERICAN INSTITUTE OF INSTRUCTION

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## INTRODUCTORY LECTURE.

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OWING to the absence of the distinguished individual, (General Mercer of Virginia,) who was destined to fill this place on this occasion, the Directors of the Institute have imposed on me the duty of delivering the Introductory Discourse of the present year. This event is, in every point of view, matter of regret: because, while it deprives the opening of the session of its anticipated interest, and renders it necessary to substitute, in lieu of a more elaborate discourse, one prepared with but brief space for meditation or composition,—it interferes, at the same time, with a favorite and most valuable object of the Institute.

In the foundation of this society, as of every one having extensive purposes of intellectual or moral usefulness in view, the concentration of thoughts and efforts from divers quarters, and the combination of minds of various discipline, is an all essential principle. A characteristic trait of the European stock, whether in Europe or America, as it cannot but be perceived and admitted, is advancement, progression, improvement, change in the hope and prospect of a better condition. And this not so much on the part of governments,—which, in all times and places, more frequently resist than favor change, because the depositaries of power naturally clings to their own tenure of it,—but on the



part of the individual members of society, who in solitary meditation search out hidden truths, — maxims of ethics, economy and legislation, — facts in the physical sciences, — processes or instruments appertaining to the useful arts, — and who apply the discoveries or inventions thus made to the melioration and civilization of the world. And how is this end reached? Occasionally, there enters upon the scene of life a man of transcendent intellect, who, lighting upon a happy combination of circumstances, or rather placed in it by an all-seeing and all-disposing power, changes the whole face of things by the leviathan force of one mind; — some Bacon or Newton, who creates philosophy anew, — some Arkwright, Whitney, Fulton, Senefelder, Perkins, Davy, who, as with a touch of the enchanter's wand of genius, gives being or impulse to a great department of knowledge or art, — some Gregory, Luther, or Calvin, who in the seclusion of his cabinet plans and accomplishes the reformation of whole nations, — some Charlemagne or Napoleon, who revolutionizes Christendom. But these are not the ordinary cases of human efficiency. In the every-day course of affairs, in the bounded circle wherein most men are destined to move, it is by the combination of their joint efforts, — it is by the formation of voluntary societies, made up of the means, time, and talents, of persons comparatively feeble in the solitary individual, but strong in the aggregate body, — it is thus that so much of excellent and useful is effected in the social system of Europe and America.

Time would fail, in seeking to recount the multitude of societies, — moral, scientific, literary, religious, political, — scattered all over the great commonwealth of the civilized nations of Christendom. The famous fraternities of chivalry in the time of the Crusades were examples of them pertinent to that age; as were the associations for the suppression of vice and crime in the Spanish Peninsula, called the Holy Brotherhood, at a later period. In our own time,



objects of art, literature, morals, or politics, are their accustomed aim. Multitudinous as they are, it would be strange if some of them were not wrong in principle or perverted in their application. But their usefulness in the main seems indisputable ; at least there are no arguments adverse to them in the general, saving such as tend to suppress the propagation of knowledge or the cultivation of virtue, and in effect strike at the very foundations of social union. In simple truth, let me reiterate, they are the means, whereby all of us, however humble be our condition, may participate in great designs, which must otherwise devolve exclusively on pre-eminent wealth, ability, or power. This, moreover, is the answer to so much "bald unjointed chat," which is abroad among us, to the prejudice of corporate enterprises of usefulness or gain ; for, as with joint efforts of mind, so with corporate investments of property ; they do but enable men of moderate capitals to share in great undertakings ; and therein lies their signal advantage for a country of enterprising inhabitants and unexhausted resources like the United States.

In the wide range of topics proper to the occasion, there is one, which passing events and pending discussions have served to force upon the attention, as peculiarly opportune to the character and objects of the Institute. What are the true uses of Instruction ? How much and how little of good or of evil does Education accomplish ? What are the limits of social or individual benefit, on the one hand, — what are, on the other, the hazards of injurious operation, — appertaining to the reciprocal influence of mind over mind ? All animated things about us are instinct with the love of knowledge ; colleges, schools, lyceums, associations for the dissemination of learning, abound ; to possess and cultivate the liberal and useful arts, — in a word, Instruction, is the distinguishing quality of a state of civilization, as to



neglect or be without it is the familiar indication of low and brutish barbarism. Ignorance, it is tritely said,

“Ignorance is the curse of God,  
Knowledge the wings with which we fly to heaven.”

Is this true? Is knowledge identical with virtue? And if it be not, what are the qualifications needed, to reduce the popular estimation of Instruction to a just standard? Grant that the neglect or absence of Instruction be rightly deemed the characteristic of a state of barbarism: is not a highly cultivated society prone to form an exaggerated conception of the value, or an erroneous judgment of the ends, of Instruction?

Understand me: I am not about to lend myself to the poor paradox, that the propagation of knowledge tends to corrupt the morals of a community, to give new virulence to vice, and augment the commission of crime. On the contrary, I propose to illustrate what seems to me the true answer to such depraved opinions, by discrimination of the genuine uses of Instruction. Most readers are aware of the controversy excited in France by the doctrine of Rousseau's celebrated prize-essay, to the effect that the re-establishment of science and art had proved prejudicial to the moral purity of modern Europe; nay, more, that it was essentially in the nature of knowledge to check the growth of virtue. However learnedly or ingeniously this position was maintained, it failed, of course, to gain foothold in society. Pyrrho might prove the non-existence of matter; Berkley and Hume might tread in a similar path of metaphysical subtilty; still, as in their case, so in that of Rousseau, common sense revolted from the absurdity of their conclusions by whatever plausible reasoning attained. To believe that savage life was better or happier than civilized; to persuade men to abandon the refined enjoyments and elevated occupations of civilization, and betake them-



selves to the mere sensual existence of the man of the woods,—was of course impossible; and this extreme view of the subject passed off, as it well might, for the misguided ingenuity of a “self-torturing sophist.” But then came another idea equally chimerical, that of the perfectibility of the social system through the agency of mind upon mind, as argued by Condorcet. This doctrine, also, had its day; and while thinkers are settling down in the conviction that change and vicissitude are the lot of nations as of men, they are in general equally convinced of the capacity of nations, and of men composing them, for an undefined, though not an infinite, degree of improvement, through the instrumentality of Instruction.

And to supply an obvious deficiency in the old European system, which, by reason of the limited number of places of education, admitted to them only the rich and great, or rather only the favored few,—the prevalent aim of our time, and especially our country, has been to render the advantages of knowledge accessible to the universal people. Common schools, supported by the rich for the elementary instruction of the poor, we have been accustomed to esteem as among the peculiar excellences of our institutions, especially in the Northern States. From Germany, where it so generally obtains, this pervading universality of education was recently adopted by France. Since the new infusion of democratic influence into the government of Great Britain, in that country, also, the expediency of it has come up for consideration; but there its introduction is encountered in Parliament with plausible facts, urged prominently by an individual, who is himself a striking example of perverted talents, and of the insufficiency of knowledge to communicate virtue. Cobbett’s opinion seems to differ from Rousseau’s in this:—While Rousseau, with indiscriminate and consistent zeal, affirmed the inutility, or rather injurious quality, of science and art in the general,



and to the whole society, — Cobbett, with characteristic inconsistency, reforming, radical, and plebeian as he professes to be, raised as he is by the uplifting energies of cultivated Mind from the humblest condition of life, and exulting as he does that his advice has contributed to reduce thousands of the people of a civilized and Christian country from affluence or competency to want, for imputed aristocracy of character, like Eratosthenes beside the blackened masses of Diana's temple glorying in perpetual infamy, or like Satan rejoicing with such joy as devils can feel, and as they only can feel, over the expulsion of our first parents from Eden, — this man would confine the fruits of learning to the rich and high-born alone, excluding the laborious and the poor from all access to the blessed fountains of knowledge and of life. It is the confutation of this iniquitous theory, so totally at war with all the settled maxims of our national policy, and the confutation of it by plain and practical considerations, which constitutes the chief object of this discourse.

It is obvious at first blush, and therefore may as well be stated at once as the solution of the whole difficulty, that Cobbett, like Rousseau, mistakes the inadequacy of Instruction in certain of its branches or forms to produce a given result, for the quality of being essentially incompatible with that result. As Lord Althorpe justly replied, he was arguing, not of Education as it may and should be, but of bad or defective Education. Doubtless a man may be taught proficiency in crime. Besides, instruction in arithmetic or chirography, in the art of painting or sculpture, will not impart moral purity. How, indeed, should it? The knowledge of geography is not the true perception of moral truth. Granted. But are they inconsistent one with another? Does the acquisition of knowledge necessarily prevent or check the acquisition of virtue? That it does, and this by the operation of a fixed law of nature, is the fallacy at the bottom of all the sophistry in question.



Let me elucidate this point by analysing the elementary parts of Instruction or Education. It is not unfrequently distinguished, in a scientific use of terms, into physical, as applied to the body, and moral, as applied to the mind; but it may be more convenient at the present time, and equally clear, to use the word moral in its popular sense, as distinguished from intellectual. Instruction in seminaries of education, it is apparent, is chiefly applied to the formation of the mind, as thus contrasted with the character or moral feelings; to communicate sets of facts, processes of reasoning, arts, or accomplishments. But is not the character, the aggregate of each one's opinions and principles, a portion of the intellectual being of the man? May not good opinions, right principles, be imparted by instruction, as well as the knowledge of historical facts, or skill in the exercise of a liberal art? Not that our intellectual and moral peculiarities are wholly the result of Education. Far from it. Inborn differences in the force of the various capacities and tendencies of men are the subject of every day's observation; and to deny their existence is to reason against the most familiar facts of life. But is there any ground to maintain that, of these various capacities or tendencies, those which belong to what are popularly known as character or virtue, are any less susceptible of cultivation or developement than those which belong to the department of genius or intellect? Surely not. And yet the false opinions under review presuppose that instruction is absolutely limited to science, learning, and the arts. Those opinions assume that moral culture is, and can be, no part of Education.

It is curious to observe how the same questions recur upon men from time to time; and how continually we travel over and retread anew the same field of dispute in successive ages. That profound thinker, John Locke, insisted, in his day, upon this capital object of Education,



moral cultivation. "It is virtue, then, direct virtue," he says in his *Thoughts concerning Education*, "which is the hard and valuable part to be aimed at in education, and not a forward pertness, or any little arts of shifting. All other considerations should give way and be postponed to this. This is the solid and substantial good, which tutors should not only read, lecture and talk of, but the labor and art of education should furnish the mind with, and fasten there, and never cease till the young man had a true relish of it and placed his strength, his glory and his pleasure in it." To the same effect is Lord Kames, who says, in his *Hints on Education*: "It appears unaccountable that our teachers, generally, have directed their instructions to the head, with very little attention to the heart. From Aristotle down to Locke, books without number have been compiled for cultivating and improving the understanding, few in proportion for cultivating and improving the affections." And so Milton, also, in the very outset of his *Letter on Education*, premises that, "The end, then, of learning is to repair the ruin of our first parents, by inquiring to know God aright, and out of that knowledge to love him, to imitate him, to be like him, as we may the nearest, by possessing our souls of true virtue, which, being united to the heavenly grace of faith, makes up the highest perfection." And these are the suggestions of the truest and most practical wisdom not less than of venerable names and exalted authority: considerations, which have entirely escaped those, who so much depreciate the uses of Instruction in the improvement of society.

But let us examine the particular arguments for the new theory of the injurious effects of popular education, as given to us by its promulgator. Mr Roebuck introduced into the House of Commons a motion for inquiry into the means of establishing a system of National Education; which he carefully described as designed to cover moral



and religious, equally with intellectual, cultivation. Mr Cobbett objected to the motion absolutely and unequivocally, on account of, as he alleged, the injurious effects of instruction upon the laboring classes; and Lord Althorpe replied, defending the general object contemplated by Mr Roebuck.\*

In Mr Cobbett's remarks, we find four distinct propositions maintained, or suggested for consideration.

First, it is alleged that contemporaneously with the diffusion of Education, crime has increased; and thereupon it is argued that Instruction has not been productive of any good, but rather on the whole of evil, implying that it has tended to produce the alleged increase of crime.

Secondly, it being stated that, of convicts in New York, a majority are educated persons, by which is probably intended persons possessed of elementary school instruction, it is inferred that Education has done nothing toward preventing crime in America.

Thirdly, it is urged that Instruction is calculated to inspire the poor with sentiments unsuited to their condition, and thus to render them unfit for the laborious uses of life.

Fourthly, the expense to the community, in the time abstracted from labor in the process of educating a child belonging to the laboring classes, is objected.

As to the last argument, it needs but a moment's consideration: because, if education be intrinsically injurious to the poor, it should be discarded for that cause, and there is no occasion to inquire into the expense of imparting it; and if it be beneficial to them, then it is simply a question whether the amount of benefit, either to the individual, or to society through him, be sufficient to justify the expense. In the latter alternative, we may justly tax the rich for the education of the poor; both on selfish principles, for the

\* Extracts from the debate, June 3d, 1834, as appended to this Discourse.



general security of society, and of the rich as the part of it most needing protection ; and also on the same principle of humanity, which dictates the establishment of penitentiaries and hospitals at the public charge.

But the other considerations deserve to be maturely examined. If they be true, it is important for us, in this country, to understand it ; because here popular education obtains universally ; it is one of the favored means of improving the people and sustaining our democratic institutions ; and if we are mistaken in this, we are indeed fallen into a most fatal career of misgovernment. — On the contrary, if they be not true, and if the erroneous belief in them arises from a partial misconception of the uses of Instruction, or imperfection in its forms, then it behoves us to seek out and apply the proper remedy for the evil. And therefore let us look at the details of the general position, which is : that the education of the poor, by rendering them discontented with their condition of life, induces habits of idleness, or of indisposition to laborious occupation, and so prompts to the commission of crime as the means of subsistence.

Doubtless it is true that Education instils into men a desire to rise above the condition of menial servants ; and the gentry of England may have found the fathers of the last generation better servants than their sons of the present generation. But this effect naturally flows from every cause, which tends to raise the condition of the poor. It is occasioned, not more by the dissemination of knowledge among them, which opens to them higher conceptions of the ends of life, and sentiments of personal independence, than by the increase of wages connected with the prosperity of productive industry in any of its departments, such as the profits of commerce or manufacture, and the abundance and cheapness of lands. These circumstances tend to soften the distinction between master and servant,



by facilitating the rise of the latter to personal respectability and competency ; but they do not of themselves induce to the commission of crime or immorality. Nay, on the other hand, it is infirmity of character, which tends to throw persons back into a secondary or dependent condition in life.

Then supposing it to be the fact in the case of England, that intemperance, theft, and other descriptions of vice and crime have increased among the poor within a few years, is popular education the cause of the increase? Clearly, there is no necessary dependence of vice or crime upon knowledge. And there is ample cause, independent of that, for the prevalence of vice and crime in England at the present time ; such as the long duration of peace, the low price of labor, the overcrowded state of the population, the weight of taxation, and the consequent difficulty of procuring subsistence ; and above all, from the greater publicity given to crime, and the greater care in bringing it to punishment, produced by the increasing diffusion of knowledge. There is much reason to believe it is the increase of crime only in appearance, that is, of convictions, not of crimes, which forms the subject of so much speculation and study at the present time. And, if it were otherwise, instead of arguing that Education had produced this state of things, we would be disposed to argue that, but for education, there would have been a still greater amount of crime and immorality ; and that the real mischief was insufficiency in the quantity, or imperfection in the quality, of the education. True, Education has not prevented the perpetration of crime. And why? Independently of the essential infirmity of everything human, is it not because of the prevalent error, that instruction is the communication of knowledge, rather than the promoter of virtuous character? That good character is necessarily to ensue in the cultivation of knowledge?

Prior to the time, when the supposed increase of crimi-



nality in England attracted observation, the true state of the case, — the evil and the remedy, — were briefly alluded to in the very useful book on the Police of London, as follows:

“ Knowledge, so far as it refers to human actions, teaches to discern good from evil, and obviously directs and induces us, from self-love, to seek the one and avoid the other. But from the knowledge now sedulously diffused as popular instruction, we anticipate no injury whatever, and certainly no great benefit; much of it will never reach those for whom it is benevolently intended; and if it did, their lot forbids, without a previous change in their condition, that they can be able to appreciate and enjoy its objects, pleasures, and advantages. Of teachers of science we have abundance, of morality very few: yet the former is little more than the art of gain, the latter of happiness. Unless popular education include morality as well as science, it cannot be said to operate either as an instrument or preventive of depravity; it is simply an engine of power; and whether converted to evil or good, depends on impulses derived from other sources.”\*

The statistics of crime afford us yet surer aid in the formation of a correct judgment in this matter. On occasion of the riots, which pervaded the agricultural districts of England during the closing months of the year 1830, the state of education among the guilty peasantry became a topic of inquiry, and the result is given as follows, in a foreign publication of authority:† —

“ Debasing ignorance prevails to an extent, which could not be credited, were it not verified by the closest investigation. The facts which have been elicited respecting the

\* Treatise on the Police and Crimes of the Metropolis, (1829) pp. 226, 227.

† Report of the British and Foreign School Society, quoted in American Annals of Education, vol. iv. p. 254.



moral and intellectual state of those counties, which have been disgraced by riots and acts of incendiarism, are truly affecting, and yet they are but a fair representation of the actual state of our peasantry. We call ourselves an enlightened nation, and educated people; and yet, out of nearly 700 prisoners put on trial in four counties, upwards of 260 were as ignorant as the savages of the desert: they could not read a single letter. Of the whole 700, only 150 could write, or even read with ease; and in the words of one of the chaplains to the jails, nearly the whole number were totally ignorant with regard to the nature and obligation of true religion."

It is quite preposterous to pretend that Education had any influence in augmenting crime amid a population thus brutally debased and ignorant. There is, however, an ascertained effect of the diffusion of knowledge upon crime, which is well stated in another foreign publication.\*

"In Russia, where education can scarcely be said to exist, out of 5800 crimes committed within a certain period, 3500 were accompanied by violence; while in Pennsylvania, where education is more generally diffused, out of 7400 crimes, only 640 were accompanied by violence, being in the proportion of one twelfth of the whole, instead of three fifths, as in the former case. Thus the only ascertained effect of intellectual education on crime is to substitute fraud for force; the cunning of civilized, for the violence of savage life. Nor would even this small change be permanent. A highly intellectual community without moral principles and the habits of self-denial which religion imposes, would only prove a sleeping volcano, ready to awake every moment, and overthrow those very institutions under which it had been fostered. To increase the intellectual

\* Scottish Guardian, quoted in American Annals of Education, vol. iv. p. 255.



powers and enlarge the knowledge, of a man devoid of principle, is only to create in him new desires, to make him restless and dissatisfied, hating those that are above him, and desirous of reducing all to his own level; and you have but to realize universally such a state of society to fill the cup of the world's guilt and misery to the brim."

These views, tending to explain the exact influence of civilization, or intellectual cultivation, upon the spread of crime, are confirmed by all the criminal returns in England. Thus it appears by the Parliamentary Returns, that of 14,947 convictions in England in 1832, so many as 10,130 were for simple larceny, and only 544 were for crimes coming under the head of daring and forcible violations of public order. And in the facts of the violent crimes, there is, on the whole, an absence of the outrage and cruelty, which used to be their concomitants, showing a progressive mitigation of the old ferocity of the uneducated populace. This fact is more strikingly true of the civic than of the rural population, in regard to which the result of social improvement in London is said to be this :\* —

"All those descriptions of criminals, who were wont to inspire the greatest terror, have not indeed been entirely extirpated, but have at least been forced to withdraw from the systematic pursuit of their lawless courses. A burglary, a robbery on the highway, a murder, still occasionally occurs; but those bands of marauders, who used to make our streets and roads constantly unsafe at certain hours, are broken up and no longer exist. The law, which was formerly kept in check by those ruffians, is now master and keeps them in check. The substitution of this state of things is an immense gain. It is a step forward in civilization. The practical benefit of the change, — that which we feel every day and every hour, — is not to be told. We move about

\* Companion to the Newspaper for 1833, p. 65, 81.



every where without dread or danger. No man, generally speaking, dreams of the chance of being either murdered, or knocked down, or robbed, of being exposed to injury either in person or property, while passing along the public street or the king's highway. The robberies, and assaults, and murders, that are still sometimes perpetrated, take place out of sight, in remote and lonely situations."

Not long after the discussion of the subject of education in the House of Commons, the same question came up in the House of Lords, in connexion with the subject of Prison Discipline, (June 29, 1834.) Lord Wharncliffe, in stating the fact that instruction did not of itself diminish crime, was careful, with a practical good sense and candid consideration, the reverse of the shallow dogmatism of Mr Cobbett, to confine himself to the kind and degree of education hitherto introduced into England:—in which view of the subject Lord Melbourne and Lord Brougham concurred, while they maintained the general utility of united moral and intellectual education.\*

In France, also, the topic has undergone discussion, in books and in deliberative assemblies, and the statesmen of that country have arrived at the true solution of the question. MM. Dupin and Lucas have shown that in France, as in England, the higher crimes, those accompanied by brutality and violence, and proceeding from the revengeful and licentious passions, are lessened as we become more civilized and enlightened; whilst petty crimes against property will increase relatively, and it may be absolutely, as the extremes of wealth and poverty, and the accumulation of capital, become prominent features of society.† In making provision for moral and religious training, as a part of the new system of universal national education, which the French have lately adopted, they have shown their per-

\* See extracts at the end of the Discourse.

† *Encyclopædia Americana, Crime.*



ception of the evil to be remedied, the deficiency to be supplied, in order to render Instruction an effective agent of moral and social elevation. On the other hand, the French Commissioners, MM. de Beaumont and de Tocqueville, in their work on the Penitentiary System of the United States, fall into the common error of treating instruction as merely the acquisition of certain rudiments of learning; and thence draw injurious inferences as to the utility of Education; which are very conclusively refuted by the American translator, Dr Lieber.\*

So much for the argument founded on the relative state of crime and of Instruction in Europe. As for the case of New York, that may be shortly dismissed. In a community or country, where all the inhabitants are taught to read and write, it must needs be that the criminals also possess those qualifications. The fact, that they do so, proves, as in the other case, simply that Instruction has not absolutely put an end to the commission of crime; that, unaided, or as at present conducted, it is insufficient for the prevention of all crime. Besides, a very considerable portion of our criminal population is composed of hardened men self-exiled from other countries; by whom the most daring and systematic acts of robbery or burglary have usually been committed. And those among them, who could not read, are probably for the most part the off-scouring of the jails, and the refuse of the alms-houses of Europe.

These considerations, it may be, are didactic, dry, uninteresting; but there is no alternative, in discussing this part of the case, between being very plain or very superficial; since it is a point of statistical explanation, unsusceptible of rhetorical ornament. Assuming the view thus presented to be just, let us now regard its application to the United States.

The superiority of the people of the United States, at

\* Penitentiary System in the United States, pp. 63, 247, and Int. p. xxv.



least of its free population, to Europeans in general, in three things, — liberality of political institutions, general diffusion of knowledge, and moral cultivation, — we will, as we safely may, take with us in the outset.

Look first at our political institutions. We continually speak of them in general terms; and the name, the aspiration of LIBERTY issues habitually and spontaneously from our lips; and free government, a government of the people and for the people, is ever present to our thoughts; and we ought all to appreciate the unrivalled blessings of our happy lot in the possession of republican institutions, which, however ill they be sometimes administered, or whatever imperfections there be in some of their parts, are yet in themselves such as no other land enjoys. But we do not understand, we cannot estimate, the extent of the evils in government and legislation, which paralyze the industry of so many fertile regions of Europe.

Take an illustration of this in the case of a country so fortune-favored even as England, where the discussions, connected with, and consequent upon, parliamentary reform, have yet forced upon our attention so many corruptions in her political system: — the oppression of the corn-laws and tithe-system in England, — the iniquity of the disabilities so long imposed upon Catholics, — the double tax for the support of two religions in Ireland, — the unbearable misery of the manufacturing and agricultural poor in both islands, — the universal sacrifice of the laboring classes to the privileges and perquisites of the nobles, the gentry, the clergy, and the office-holders. Still, how far is England above Spain, Germany, Russia, if not above France, in the liberality of her political institutions! But why look deep or seek far in quest of illustrations of this point, when one, the best of all, lies before us on the very surface of society. In parts of Europe, it is penal to possess arms, without a license, because the governors cannot trust them indiscrimin-



ately in the hands of the governed ; here it is penal not to possess them ; and the contrast affords most cogent proof of the state of social freedom relatively in Europe and America.

*O fortunatos minium, sua si bona norint !*

Happy, thrice happy should we be, did we never wantonly dash from our lips the cup of happiness and prosperity !

Look, secondly, at the intellectual condition of the people of the United States, or at least of New England. Here, every body acquires the elements of knowledge at our common schools ; lecture-rooms and lyceums abound on all hands ; elementary publications for the purposes of instruction in the rudiments of learning are accessible to the whole world ; and all the higher branches of information, religious teaching, moral wisdom, literary cultivation, are within the reach of the humblest individual in the land. Let me illustrate this position, also, by plain intelligible fact, instead of leaving it upon the trust of naked assertion.

There exist, in all countries, national usages, established modes of doing the most ordinary of things, which are pregnant with inference touching the points on which they bear. Here, the great abundance and extreme cheapness of newspapers are sufficiently evident ; and without pausing to reflect on the subject, we could scarce do justice to the value and amount of intelligence, which the diurnal press affords, penetrating as it does through all the relations of life. Spread forth before you that familiar sheet. As the eye glides over its crowded columns, it takes in at a glance what volumes of fact gathered from the very ends of the earth, and multiplied in how many forms of communication by the richest and grandest of human inventions ! In it, are single lines, a name even, which, speechless to the general eye, yet pours a tide of gladness, or deadens the very life's blood, in the bosom of many a fellow creature. The



solitary wife sits by her domestic hearth; as the infant prattler climbs on her knee, how thinks she of him, the cynosure of her heart's affections, far away along the great deep, tempest-tossed it may be upon its foaming surface, or perchance sunk "lower than plummet can reach," beneath its devouring waves;—and what rapture will not a simple word, meaningless to all beside, impart to her eager gaze! And how many hopes lie buried forever in the brief record of deaths, which that sheet contains; what a world of emotions and sufferings will not the imagination enter, if it follow up the scenes of sorrow, coupled with each of those unregarded names! Half a dozen lines chronicle the result of a battle fought in the mountains of Biscay or Navarre, or by the lemon-groves and vine-covered hills of Santarem. Call up the scene to your eyes; think of those about to meet in mortal conflict before you; the flash and pomp of advancing squadrons; the deep earth sending up the tramp of their hosts, and the roar of their cannon to the sky; and the lifeless thousands of brave hearts and gallant spirits that lie low upon that stricken field; reflect on crowns there to be lost and won, and the happiness or misery of millions of men hanging on the fearful issue of victory:—and then how changed is the interest embodied in a single cold half-read paragraph. I suggest these obvious considerations, merely as indicating the real, but unestimated, importance of those daily gazettes, which here every body reads, every body buys, every body has in his family as among the common conveniences of life. But how is it with this great source of intelligence elsewhere? In England, the great political newspapers are an expensive luxury, which people in general read only in news-rooms and coffee-houses, or hire by the hour, as is the established custom in London. That is, there are individuals, part of whose daily trade and business it is, to let newspapers by the hour, just as books are hired from a circulating library.



Again. Here, in New England, every man can read and write. At least, the exceptions to this are so few, that if in the course of business you encounter a person who cannot read and write, you may safely presume that he is not a native of the country. Whereas, in Europe, the common accomplishment of writing is but sparingly possessed by the laboring classes, so much so, that, as in the East, the business of writing for hire is a stated occupation of individuals in the cities and large towns, in many parts of the Continent; and little cabinets or offices are seen, where the public writer receives his customers:—So much inferior is the school condition of the general mass in Europe.

Look, in the third place, at the better moral and religious condition of the people of New England;—at their more correct observance of the ordinances of religion; at their free-handedness in the support of public worship, which although, in the existing state of the law, it is chiefly spontaneous, far exceeds that of other countries in aggregate amount of benefaction; at our peaceful and tranquil Sabbaths, which, elsewhere the world over, if we only except a part of Great Britain, are consigned to idleness, riot, vice, and violence;—look at all, in short, of pure, and peculiar, and admirable, and exalted, which distinguishes the moral aspect of New England. I say New England, because there, pre-eminently, is the fact apparent, and because in Virginia, Carolina, and elsewhere at the South, the existence of negro-servitude is a deadly blight upon the social and economical condition of the country, weighing down its prosperity, corrupting the morals of its people of every class and color, and condemning it to long endurance of public evils, which are the more melancholy to observe on account of the extreme difficulty of discovering how or when the source of them shall cease to exist. Nor do I allege the mere fact of prosperity as such,—the physical well-being of our population, in all that relates to the influence of



clothing, shelter, food, and other necessities of life, or the animal health and strength ; for this flows in some degree from the cheapness and abundance of lands, the consequent high price of labor, and the general profitableness of industry, in all parts of America as compared with Europe.

But the political, intellectual and moral condition of the United States, which I have thus dwelt upon, — so peculiar in itself, so strongly contrasted with that of other great and powerful nations, — whence then, does it spring? What is that potent principle, manifest in the character, conduct, and history of our fathers, and so efficacious in moulding the destinies of their sons, out of old materials building up this novel and original people in the New World? Undeniedly, it is the peculiar circumstances of our extraction and colonial origin, the ancestry we possess, and above all the systematic combination of moral and intellectual instruction in their schools and colleges, which serves to account for much that is excellent in our national manners — for the high tone of moral and religious feeling, and the general activity and industry of condition, and the wide diffusion of intelligence, which characterize the people of New England. Our fathers were not armed adventurers, stimulated by the lust of gold or ambition of conquest; but men of deep-seated moral purposes, flying from persecution at home, to found in the wilderness of the New World a state after their own hearts; bigoted, doubtless, like all men of high-souled and single-minded enthusiasm of resolve; but withal well-informed beyond the ordinary rate of their countrymen of the same class, and honorably distinguished for a correctness of moral deportment, a devotedness to the duties of religion, and a self-relying thriftiness of temper, which have made the appellation of Puritans, originally applied in scorn and derision, to become at length a name of pride and glory. Such, it is matter of obvious remark



and familiar conviction, are the distinctive traits, which have descended to the inhabitants of the Eastern States. Have we sufficiently reflected how far causes, truly similar, although apparently different, have stamped a general conformity of character upon the people and institutions of the whole United States?

True it is, that the Puritans, the commonwealth's men and religious independents of the times of Hampden, Pym, Vane, and Cromwell, are the marked and predominant sect, among the primitive people of the British Colonies. True it is, that in the public schools founded among us, in the houses of religious worship built, in the great struggles of liberty conducted through years of suffering and bloodshed to a successful issue, and in the constitutional governments established, theirs was the consistent spirit of enlightened and indomitable independence, which gave life and soul to the efforts of the United Colonies. True it is, also, that the enterprising sons of New England have sown themselves as it were broadcast over the whole Continent, transporting the blessings of common schools, of universal religious instruction, and of industrious activity, along the bright track of their advance into the farthest West. But they stood not alone, oh no, they stood not alone, by the sacred altar of freedom, when they pledged their lives, their fortunes, and their honor, in their country's cause. Protestants, driven into exile by the intolerance of their Catholic brethren in France, had come to find themselves a refuge and a home in New York or Carolina; Catholics, forced abroad in like manner by the intolerance of their Protestant brethren of Britain, had planted themselves in Maryland: — testifying, by the community of their suffering and the diversity of its cause, that the parts of oppressor and oppressed belong to no peculiar form of religious faith, to no solitary stream of national blood. Nay, differing still from each of these great denominations of men, were the Quakers, who



peopled the banks of the Delaware, and gave their own character of puritanism in religion and morals to the legislation and social habits of that section of the Union. And so many thousands of wronged and persecuted Irish, and of sufferers for opinion's sake of the various nations of Europe, as from year to year they seek an asylum on our shores, — all these illustrate the workings of the great principle, which governed the settlement of the country, and which, qualified and mellowed by time, but by no means deprived of its native force, still pervades the social organization of the United States.

That great principle, the only true secret of useful popular education, is the simultaneous moral and intellectual institution of the people. This is the key-stone of our social arch ; this, the fundamental doctrine of our political faith : — to make the cultivation of the mind go along hand in hand with the cultivation of the moral affections ; whilst enlarging the understanding, to purify the heart ; doing violence to no man's conscientious religious belief, and at the same time, in the systems of education and public instruction of whatever kind, to enforce the great moral truths, which belong alike to all the creeds of Christendom : such is the great hereditary social duty devolved on the descendants of the Puritans. In these principles were most of the Colonies settled ; in obedience to them, were our common schools, our colleges, and our parishes established ; in conformity therewith were the political constitutions of the country framed ; in and by those principles only, under the benediction of God, and through the united intelligence and purity of the people, can our liberties be sustained ; in the admonition of such principles are the native children of the soil nurtured and bred ; and to the equal enjoyment of the blessings they ensure, do we welcome the adopted citizen, provided he takes care to bring with him the same pure and noble moral purposes which our fathers brought,



when, like them, he claims a refuge in America from oppression and injustice in Europe.

Of mere intellectual instruction, however, there are certain general effects, which it is impossible to deny. Such is its tendency to diffuse in society the spirit of freedom, although not seldom degenerating into licentiousness; and to augment the comforts of life through inventions or discoveries in useful art: — that is, in accelerating the general march of civilization. In addition to these general effects of mere intellectual instruction upon the social condition of mankind, in civilizing it, refining and elevating it, and augmenting the comforts and conveniences of life, it clearly has a moral effect in civilizing, refining and elevating the individual character. Or, as Addison phrases it, Education, “when it works upon a noble mind, draws out to view every latent virtue and perfection.” It gives men the faculty at least of judging between right and wrong, if it do not give them the disposition to use it. He who is intellectually well-informed, cannot but say, *Video meliora proboque*; although he do add, *deteriora sequor*. All the fine-spun sophistry of Rousseau in objection to this, had been refuted, eighteen hundred years before it was written, in Tully’s beautiful Oration for Archias. The Genevan maintained that the pursuit of knowledge corrupted the manlier virtues of courage, patriotism, disinterestedness. Not so, said the Roman. It were, indeed, too much to affirm that those great men, the lights of their time, whose virtues are held up to us for imitation in the records of the past, were uniformly learned in all the teaching of books. Confess we, that many there have been of excellent spirit and virtue, and who without education, by a sort of divine institution of nature herself, have risen to moral dignity through their own inborn resources. Nay, be it admitted that nature more frequently achieves glory and virtue without learning, than learning without nature. But, at the same time, when, to a distin-



guished and illustrious nature a due proportion and conformation of teaching is adjoined, then there is used to result a singular and surpassing perfection of greatness ; as is the case of one divinely endowed of our fathers' time, Publius Africanus.\* And the expressions which thus literally, with scarce a change in the place of a word, I transcribe from the pages of Cicero, are commended to our approbation by every argument of common sense and of universal experience.

But Instruction, intellectual Instruction, is not of itself sufficient to assure the moral purity of society ; and to compass this, we need to develope and follow out the principle of conjoined moral and intellectual education descended to us from the Puritans. Late events have shown us that, with all our intelligence, our morality, our sense of and respect for the force of religion, we slumber in false security. On the surface, the aspect of society is bright and smiling ; the loveliest flowers and the richest fruits of refined life are ours ; the fabric of our greatness lifts its proud battlements to the skies, and pushes down its foundations deep into the everlasting hills ; but the fires of disorder and corruption are smouldering beneath our feet, and may burst forth upon us at an hour in the earthquake voice of destruction. So far as writing, teaching, acting, may avail, there devolves upon us the duty of counteracting and conjuring down the troubled spirit of disorganization ; of drying up the sources of evil and opening new fountains of good ; of seeking to infuse into society not only liberal knowledge, but also sound moral and religious principles. There is, in the heart even of our purest cities, a crusade preaching against the very existence of social order, a war waged on all we most value in our national institutions, of religious, moral, social and political. The crisis calls loudly on the for-

\* Ciceron. Orat. pro Archia, c. 7.



bearance and virtuous feeling of every member of society ; but there be classes of individuals, having pre-eminent capacity of usefulness. They are,

In the first place, all men of moderate means, who are looking to acquire a competency in life by their skill or application to business. These have particular cause to reprobate a disorganized state of society ; because such men, with their families cannot fail to be among the first victims of any great social convulsion. At such crises, the very rich may transfer their wealth to foreign funds, or during the early stages of change employ it in profitable usury at home ; the very poor have nothing to lose ; but all intermediate classes are crushed and swallowed up in the vortex of national calamity. Doubtless the apostles of the new political faith hold up an equal distribution of property as the lure of their school. If it were to be so, it would be to purchase a small temporary good at the price of a great permanent evil. But such a distribution would never take place. Suppose a social revolution to be impending in this country. What would be the practical effect of such a thing in prospect ? Capital in specie, ships, merchandize, would speedily fly to other lands ; what little gold or silver remained at home would be concealed in the earth ; manufactures, the mechanic arts, the business of transportation, commerce, would gradually dwindle away to the bare prime necessities of life ; canals, railroads, buildings, and other fixed improvements, would come to naught ; and of course under such circumstances, when destruction did but lay the weight of her hand upon the moneyed capitalist, she would tread into the dust all those who were engaged in the pursuits of productive enterprise. For them, little would be left but the desperate trade of civil war.

In the second place, the new social schemes which are abroad, and the pestilent doctrines of their school, demand



the deep indignation of the female sex, and of all, who, as fathers, as husbands, or as members of society in whatever relation, value the dignity and purity of that portion of the human race, which is given us for the ornament of life, its exquisite solace, its truest pledge of happiness, its lever of moral elevation, but which may be perverted into its degradation and its curse. It is a point susceptible of distinct and irrefragable proof as matter of history, that the social respectability of woman, exclusively proper to the countries of Christendom, is directly ascribable to two peculiar doctrines of Christianity, namely, the equal participation of woman in the external services and the spiritual sanctions of religion, and the singleness and sacredness of the marriage tie. Resting upon these two positions, we may safely challenge the world in argument. What, then, shall we say of creatures claiming to be reasonable, appealing to us for sympathy, and for extraordinary legal immunities, who, not content with levelling both sexes to the condition of brutes by impeaching our spiritual essence, would sink woman lower yet in moral debasement? What shall woman herself say to it? Woman's exalted social rank in all the countries of Christendom, her more especial and pervading personal influence in the United States, is altogether the consequence of her moral beauty of character, her delicacy, her refinement, her sensitive dignity of feeling and understanding. Strip her of them, and she is uncrowned of her diadem, dethroned from her queenly state, ungirded of her magic cestus. Shame on the shallow sophistry, if sophistry it be, and not rather miscreant profligacy, which labors to this bad end! Every principle of good order in society, every sentiment of truth and honor in the heart, recoils at such miserable profanation of the great gift of reason. For woman herself, so far as regards the general right feeling of the sex, we cannot fear :

A thousand liv'ried angels lacquey her,  
Driving far off each thing of sin and guilt.



Still it behoves all and each of us in his appointed sphere of life, that we look well to this indiscriminate assault on religion, virtue, and property ; so that public indignation may stamp its authors with the burning brand of infamy and scorn.

Finally, to all professional teachers, whether literary or religious, the times appeal that they come in aid of the laws by their instruction and their authority. And if a layman might presume to utter counsels to such ears, it would be to urge on them the great paramount obligation, at the present time, of tempering in all things the vexed waves of society, and pouring upon them the oil of conciliation and fraternal peace, rather than of breathing into the bosom of the tempest a single added breath of agitation. It is too clear a case to argue. They play a desperate game, who give themselves up to fratricide contention in the face of a common foe. Whichsoever of *them* gains a victory, his will not be the triumph. Be it unitedly our endeavor to sustain the law ; to change it by lawful means if it err ; and whatever it promises to protect, that so long as the promise holds good, faithfully to protect. And as Christians, presuppose not ill of the Greek and Roman Churches, the early recipients, and for fifteen hundred years the sole depositaries and conservators of Christianity.



## APPENDIX.

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[Extracts from a debate in the British House of Commons, June 3d, 1834, on a motion of Mr Roebuck, Member for Bath, for a Committee to inquire into the means for establishing a system of National Education.]

No. I. — pp. 11.

Mr COBBETT said : — He rose for the purpose of making a few observations on the scheme of the hon. and learned member for Bath. He could not help fearing that his scheme would not be productive of good. On the subject of education in this country, it was not philosophy or reasoning that could guide, but recourse ought rather to be had to experience. Everybody knew that within the last thirtyfive years Lancasterian and other schools had been founded, and education had increased twenty fold, but experience showed that the morals of the people had not mended with the increase of education. It had even been admitted that night, that drunkenness had increased wonderfully within latter years, so that education did not even prevent drunkenness. He repeated that all this increase of education had not been productive of any good, and he ventured to say that there was not a single country gentleman who would not say that the fathers of the last generation made better laborers, better servants, and better men, than their sons of the present generation. This proved that the laboring classes were much better without that intellectual enjoyment, which the hon. and learned member for Bath was anxious to increase to them, than they were with it. What also was the state of crime in England and Wales now, as com-



pared with its amount at the period the education of the lower orders of the people began? Why, the proportion was now at least four if not seven times as great as it was when education commenced.

[An hon. Member here said : ninefold.]

Mr Cobbett resumed. — So much the better for his (Mr C.'s) argument. Within the same period, too, the number of illegitimate children had increased to a prodigious extent; so that in this respect the morality of the people could not be said to have been advanced by education. The hon. and learned member for Bath had contended that the system of education in this country was wrong altogether, and had instanced, as an example worthy of imitation, the state of things in New York, in America, where he had said half a million of human beings were educated, and in the full tide of enjoyment of intellectual matter. He would tell the hon. and learned member the state of things in the district on the condition of which he relied. He (Mr Cobbett) had written to New York for information, since the subject was under consideration last year, and he had received an account signed by the Recorder of New York, which, though he had it not now with him, he would produce tomorrow to the hon. and learned gentleman. This account embraced a comparative statement of the number of educated criminals and the number of uneducated criminals, and showed a very considerable majority of the former over the latter. So much for education preventing crime either in America or England. It was a good people, and not a gabbling people, that was wanted in this country, and this smattering of education would only raise the laborers of this country above the situations best suited to their own interests and those of their families. It would put into their heads that they were not born to labor, but to get their living without it. By the plan suggested by the hon. and learned member for Bath the child of the laborer could not complete his education until he was at least fifteen or sixteen years of age; but in the mean time he should be glad to know who was to keep a great eating, and drinking, and



guzzling boy—who was to find him with provender all that time? Who was to satisfy his body while his intellects were being filled? The hon. and learned gentleman had said, that the laborer's boy was to receive instruction after the day's labor is over; but if the hon. and learned member knew anything of labor, he would rather prefer going to sleep. In short, if all were to be scholars, it would be necessary for the whole population to shut their mouths and determine to eat no more. The interference with labor would be the very worst course which could be pursued by the Legislature.

The consequence of putting the children of poor people to school would be to keep them from work; children were never too young for work. He had two boys under seven years of age now in his employ to keep the birds away from the corn, and each of them received half a crown a week. This was of some consequence to their fathers; it was gaining money to them. If you send the boys of poor people to slip-slop school-mistresses—if you send them to a drunken school-master—or, if you send them to a conceited coxcomb school-master, they would not keep birds away from the corn, but would run and shelter themselves under the hedge when the rain began to pelt.\* They would be brought up with such high notions, that there would be no use of them whatever. For these reasons, therefore, he objected to any system of national education, and he would oppose the motion of the hon. and learned gentleman.

No. II.—p. 17.

(Extracts from a debate in the House of Lords, June 29, 1834.)

LORD WHARNCLIFFE said: “There was another plan which had been tried with a view of producing reform in the great mass of the people; and that was education. He confessed he was one of those, who thought education would have greatly decreased crime. He regretted to say that he was disappointed.

\*I insert Mr Cobbett's speech with all its tissue of coarseness and ribaldry upon its head, as the best means of showing the inconsistency and poor prejudices of the man.



He believed that the kind of education which had been afforded had increased crime; and the more he saw, the more he was convinced of that fact. He did not doubt that the general system of education was very valuable for some purposes; but he very much doubted if the present system gave to the individuals who were subjected to it, such a power over their minds as enabled them to resist the temptation to commit crime. In support of this opinion the noble lord referred to the report of the French Commissioners on the state of education in the United States. Those Commissioners declared it to be the result of their inquiry, that the more knowledge was diffused the more crime was increased. This they attributed to the circumstance, that knowledge created wants among the humbler classes, which the perpetration of crime alone could gratify. Knowledge multiplied social relations; it produced a desire for social enjoyments; and the means of cultivating those relations, and indulging in those enjoyments which could not be honestly obtained by the lower classes in their present condition. Such was the opinion of the French Commissioners. He was very much afraid that those gentlemen were right and that the greater the diffusion of education in the country, the greater was the temptation to crime. He by no means doubted that a proper discipline of the mind in youth was highly advantageous, but he very much doubted if the mere acquisition of knowledge as such, was so. Of this he was certain, and he said it with regret, that the kind and degree of education which had hitherto been introduced into this country had not had the effect of diminishing crime."

Viscount MELBOURNE said: "It was true, as his noble friend had stated, that this increase of crime had taken place during a period when the greatest exertions were made to improve the moral condition of the country. This had been stated by his noble friend with great candor and moderation; but in other places it had frequently been stated with great bitterness, and in the shape of a taunt. It had been asked what had the Church, what had our schools, our mechanics' institutes and societies, done for the moral improvement of the people? This was not



a fair way of reasoning. It was necessary to consider what these persons were graciously pleased to leave out of their consideration, — the strength of the antagonist forces against which they had to strive. Neither ought the increase of population to be forgotten. It was to be expected that more crime would be committed by a larger than a smaller population ; and it should be remembered also that if crime had increased, the country had greatly increased in wealth, luxury, indulgence, and extent of desire, which were the real causes of and instigations to crime. It was against these antagonist powers that the moral forces of society had to contend, and considering their potency, he thought they had kept their ground pretty well ; nor was it to be made a charge against them that they had not produced what, in such a state of society, was an impossibility, viz. perfect purity and virtue. His noble friend had said that he did not perceive that any of those advantages had resulted from education which had been anticipated, nor did he expect that any of those advantages would flow from it in future. But his noble friend had not made any distinction between education and the objects to which it was directed. The object of education was the diffusion of knowledge, and knowledge, as they were justly told, was power. But power of itself was neither good nor bad, but beneficial or disadvantageous, according as it was used or applied. Knowledge itself did not secure virtue, and they knew, by melancholy examples, that the possession of the highest mental endowments, and the most cultivated intellect, did not save the possessors from the stains of immorality and vice. *Bonis literis Græcis imbutus bonam mentem non induerat.* The effects resulting from education must depend on the nature and objects of the education. If the education given were such as to give the lower orders opinions above their situations, and to impart to them a distaste for labor, it would be the most fatal and destructive gift which could be presented to them ; an apple from the tree of death. But if the education given to them were such as to teach them the necessity of labor, and of conforming themselves to their situations in life, he could have no doubt that education, based upon



such principles, and conducted in such a manner, would be productive of the most advantageous result.

The LORD CHANCELLOR was sorry to stand in the way of his noble friend; but, from the situation in which he stood, he should not think that he was well discharging his duty if he did not make a few observations on a subject so very candidly, with so much moderation, with no exaggeration, and with so much philosophical calmness, brought before the House. His noble friend, who had introduced this motion, was of all individuals, in or out of that House, the one most capable, if the profession of the law had more opportunities than any other, of seeing the working of our system of criminal law, from his situation as chairman of the west riding of the county of York. It was very possible that the diminution of crime had not borne that proportion which sanguine men expected to the progress of improvement in society. But this circumstance ought not to fill them with despair, with apprehension for the future, or regret for their past efforts, or even make them disinclined to continue those efforts in the same direction. The question in this case was rather an abstract one, and did not appear to lead directly to any practical result. It was, whether or not the increase of knowledge, the more general diffusion of it amongst all classes of the community, tended to prevent the commission of crime? He was far from being able to come to the conclusion which had been somewhat more dogmatically stated than he should have expected, in the report of two French gentlemen sent out by the French King, that it was now universally admitted that those parts of the world where knowledge was most diffused were not the most exempt from crime, but rather the contrary. Who ever expected that increasing the knowledge of the community would immediately and directly have the effect of diminishing crime? Whoever did entertain such an expectation had no right to complain of disappointment, when he found the effect did not follow his meritorious labors, because he had formed groundless and unreasonable expectations. The tendency was to improve the habits of the people, to better their principles, and to amend all that constituted their character. Princi-



ples and feelings combined made up what is called human character. And that the tendency of knowledge was to amend this character by the operation of knowledge, and in proportion to its diffusion, there could be no doubt. Its tendency was to increase habits of reflection, to enlarge the mind, and render it more capable of receiving pleasurable impressions from, and taking an interest in, matters of other than mere sensual gratification. This process operates likewise on the feelings, and necessarily tends to improve the character and conduct of the individual, to increase prudential habits, and to cultivate, in their purest form, the feelings and affections of the heart. Now, he took these things to be so pregnant, that it hardly required any illustration from fact, or any demonstration from reasoning, to show that the inevitable consequences of such a change in the human character must inevitably diminish crime. The effects of knowledge were not new; they were well known to the ancients, who had said the same thing in much better words:—

*“Emollit mores, nec sinit esse ferus.”*

Knowledge increased the prudential habits and improved the feelings and disposition. That it was the tendency of education to diminish crime was not matter of argument, but of fact. Let any man go into the gaols, and examine into the condition of the criminals, whether they were well educated or not; and he was perfectly certain that the well-educated would be found to form a very small proportion indeed of the criminals under apprehension, and smaller still of those under conviction. But the way in which this mistake had been committed was this, that in reference to this question knowledge and education were too frequently confounded. It often happened that what was taken for instruction and education was merely the first step towards it, and many persons were considered as educated, who, in reality, were possessed of nothing worthy the name of knowledge or instruction. Reading, writing, and accounts had, during the last thirty years, too often been held to imply education. A person possessed of these might, indeed, have the means of educating himself; but it did not, by any means,



follow that he would exercise those means. It was too much to assume that, because in the agricultural districts, where fewer means of education existed, crime was not so abundant as in the better educated and most thickly populated manufacturing districts, therefore education had no influence in diminishing crime. \* \* \* \* \*

No one ever said that reading meant instruction and education; still less did any one ever say that reading alone would produce the effects of instruction. His noble friend, who spoke last, and who had spoken so eloquently, had entirely expressed his views. Knowledge is power in whatever way it is used, but whether that power will be available to virtue depends on the kind of education which has been given. If a people be educated without any regard to moral instruction, it is only putting instruments into their hands, which they have every motive to misuse. But it was said, why does not education put a stop to the commission of crime? Education certainly exercises a great influence over the moral character, but he never yet heard it asserted that knowledge would alter the nature of the human being, or convert him into something of a higher or purer order than the ordinary race of mortality. His noble friend had made some remarkable statistical statements, and it appeared that more crimes were now committed in eight months, than formerly in twelve; but, had the increase of population been taken into account? But was it not to be expected that the criminals would be more numerous in a population of 14,000,000, than in a population of 7,000,000 or 8,000,000? Within less than a century the population had doubled. Within the last ten years, or rather in the calculations made from 1821 to 1831, the population of England and Wales had increased two millions. Surely it would not for a moment be expected that an increase so great could have taken place without a consequent increase of crime. There were other elements at work beside the increase of population, to which the increase of crime was to be attributed. The defects in our legislation had a direct tendency to create crime. \* \* \* He hoped he had said enough to show the necessity of taking into account the counteracting causes which operated to prevent



the extension of knowledge, from producing the effect which, but for these obstacles, its promoters had calculated upon. When the contemplated reformatations should take place, then would be seen the improvement which would follow in the train of knowledge. On one good result of education there would be no difference of opinion. There was one class of offences which varied in extent and degree exactly in proportion with the degree of knowledge which obtained in any community, and here it was to be observed, that knowledge was not in itself a cause of virtue, for the mind may be improved without any improvement of the disposition, and then knowledge may have the effect of making the mind, which was possessed of it, more active in a wrong course, and more powerful in evil; but it was evident, that in proportion to the learning of a country, crimes of violence became more rare. This was obvious in France, and equally so in this country, although crimes of fraud and larceny had not thus decreased in similar proportion.



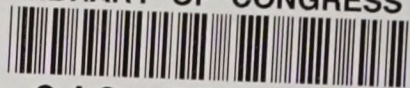








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